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Israel—The 51st State?

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OWINGS MILLS, Md.—A Middle East settlement as envisaged in U.N. Resolution 242 will depend very largely upon the degree of influence the U.S. is willing to apply to persuade Israel that her ultimate survival depends on acceptance by her neighbors and international guarantees, rather than on any specific frontiers secured by continuing military superiority.

All reports from our diplomatic missions abroad indicate that the world community—including Britain, France, and our other NATO allies—look to the United States to exercise toward this end the leverage inherent in our "special relationship" with Israel. A full understanding of this relationship is essential in considering the great responsibility Secretary of State Rogers has borne in his attempts to achieve an Arab-Israeli negotiated settlement.

When President Truman said in October of 1948, "We are pledged to a State of Israel, large enough, free enough, and strong enough to make its people self-supporting and secure," the stage was set for the gradual establishment of an association between the U.S. and another country unique in our history. Today, that association is far closer in all areas—defense, economic collaboration, intelligence exchange, common citizenship, and mutual diplomatic support than enjoyed, for example, between the U.S. and Great Britain. Unique also is Israel's almost total immunity from criticism in this country.

In dollars and cents, our assistance to Israel through the years, both governmental and private, has been prodigious. During the period between 1948-1969, United States Government economic aid totaled \$1.3 billion, while dollar transfers from private sources amounted to \$2.5 billion, a total of \$3.8 billion, or \$1,500 per capita on a current population of 2.5 million. This greatly exceeds, on a per capita basis, our assistance to any ally and compares to \$35 per capita to the peoples of thirteen neighboring states. Since 1969, our assistance to Israel has greatly increased. Dollar transfers in

1970 reached \$800 million and in 1971, will approximate \$1.5 billion. A further increase is anticipated for 1972.

Until 1967, we assured Israel a continuing supply of modern military equipment through West Germany and France and thus were able to avoid Arab hostility on this score. However, with the conclusion of German "reparations" and de Gaulle's change in Middle East policy, we have—since 1967—become the exclusive purveyor of arms to Israel. Of greater significance is the fact that qualitatively, we have provided aircraft, missiles, and electronic systems in some cases of greater sophistication and greater strike-capability than those furnished our NATO and SEATO allies.

A few months ago, the House of Representatives passed an amendment to the Defense Procurement Bill giving the President "open-ended" authority to transfer military equipment to Israel without total cost limitation. As former House Speaker McCormack remarked, "... I have never seen in my 42 years as a member of this body, language of this kind..." The Senate on Dec. 15 last, by a sixty-to-twenty vote, killed the Williams' amendment to the Defense Appropriations Bill which would have restricted the President—as with Cambodia—from sending U.S. troops into Israel without Congressional permission.

In the area of nuclear weaponry, the United States has also pursued an exceptional position vis-à-vis Israel. During the years when we were pressing over one hundred nations in the world community with whatever diplomatic, economic and military leverage we might have to adhere to the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, Israel alone was exempted from strong representations. Meanwhile, Israel reportedly has produced nuclear weapons designed for Phantom aircraft delivery.

In the exchange of intelligence, our cooperation with Israel is unprecedented. During the months prior to the June 1967 hostilities, the military intelligence requirements levied by Washington upon the Cairo Embassy, C.I.A. and military intelligence staffs were very largely based on Israeli

needs. The effectiveness of the Israeli air strikes on June 5, 1967, was assured in part, at least, by information on Egyptian air fields and aircraft disposition provided through U.S. sources. With respect to political and economic information, it was State Department practice at that time to provide the Israeli embassy in Washington with copies of those Middle East embassy reports considered of interest.

On the question of dual citizenship, Israel also enjoys an exceptional position. Under the Israel Law of Return, an American Jew entering Israel for permanent residence is automatically extended Israeli nationality. Consequently, there are now some 25,000 residents of Israel who possess both American and Israel citizenship and are entitled to the protection of the United States Government in the event of war.

Last summer, in a series of White House statements, we would seem to have extended our commitments to Israel to include the "occupied territories," her continued military superiority, and the preservation of her "Jewish character."

Only history can render a total explanation for this very special U.S.-Israel relationship. Suffice to say, it has now reached a point where Israel's security and welfare is not only considered vital to our own, but where our reaction to its possible compromise is more intense than would be evident with any of our NATO or SEATO allies. In essence, Israel has become our 51st state. As one State Department wag put it, "Were Israel's survival to be seriously threatened, we would be in World War III in two minutes—with Berlin, it might take several days!"

It is because of this frightening reality that the Administration has assumed world leadership in seeking a negotiated settlement, and Secretary Rogers has been concentrating on reopening the Suez Canal as a first step.

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